

## Glossary

**AB 32 (Assembly Bill 32):** Establishes a comprehensive program of regulatory and market mechanisms to achieve real, quantifiable, cost-effective reductions of greenhouse gases (GHG) for the State of California. Makes the [California Air Resource Board \(CARB\)](#) responsible for monitoring and reducing statewide GHG emissions, with a target to reduce emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

**Adaptive Reuse:** The conversion of obsolescent or historic buildings from their original or most recent use to a new use. For example, the conversion of former hospital or school buildings to residential use, or the conversion of an historic single-family home to office use.

**Agricultural Preserve:** Land designated for agriculture or conservation. (See “Williamson Act.”)

**Agricultural Activity:** An agricultural activity includes but is not limited to, cultivation, growing, harvesting and production of any agricultural commodity and appurtenant practices incidental to the production of agricultural commodities. The definition includes agricultural grading as described Chapter 22.52 (Grading and Drainage). [Added 1999, Ord. 2863]

**Air Basin:** A land area with generally similar meteorological and geographic conditions throughout. To the extent possible, air basin boundaries are defined by [CARB](#) along political boundary lines and include both the [source](#) and receptor areas. California is currently divided into 15 air basins.

**Air Pollutants:** Amounts of foreign and/or natural substances occurring in the atmosphere that may result in adverse effects to humans, animals, vegetation, and/or materials.

**Ambient Air:** The air occurring at a particular time and place outside of structures. Often used interchangeably with "outdoor air."

**Aquifer:** An underground, water-bearing layer of earth, porous rock, sand, or gravel, through which water can seep or be held in natural storage. Aquifers generally hold sufficient water to be used as a water supply.

**Archaeology:** The scientific study of historic or prehistoric peoples and their cultures by analysis of their buildings, artifacts, inscriptions, monuments, and other such remains.

**Base Flood:** The flood having a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. Equivalent to a 100-year flood.

**Biodiversity:** Refers to the variety of life and its processes, including the variety of living organisms, the genetic differences among them, and the communities and ecosystems in which they occur.

**Bio-solids:** The nutrient rich by-product of wastewater treatment, generated by channeling human waste through treatment plants and collection systems. Although the terms bio-solids and sewage sludge are often used interchangeably, bio-solids are the end product after treating sewage sludge with anaerobic digestion in combination with heat. Federal, state and local ordinances regulate the [use of bio-solids](#).

**Best Management Practice (BMP):** A technique, process, activity, or structure used or developed to reduce the pollutant content of a storm-water discharge.

**Blue line stream:** A perennial (continuous flow) or intermittent (seasonal flow) creek, stream or watercourse indicated by a solid or broken blue line on a U.S. Geologic Survey 7.5 minute series quadrangle map.

**Buffer Zone:** An area of land separating two distinct land uses that acts to soften or mitigate the effects of one land use on the other.

**Buildout; Build-out:** Development of land to its full potential or theoretical capacity as permitted under current or proposed planning or zoning designations. (See “Carrying Capacity”)

**California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):** A state law requiring state and local agencies to regulate activities with consideration for environmental protection. If a proposed activity has the potential for a significant adverse environmental impact, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be prepared and certified as to its adequacy before action can be taken on the proposed project. General Plans require the preparation of a “program EIR.”

**California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006:** Sets targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in California to slow the onset of human-induced climate change.

**Caltrans:** California Department of Transportation.

**Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>):** A colorless, odorless gas that occurs naturally in the Earth's [atmosphere](#). Significant quantities are also emitted into the air by fossil fuel [combustion](#). (See also the [California Climate Change Glossary](#).)

**Carbon Monoxide (CO):** A colorless, odorless gas resulting from the incomplete combustion of hydrocarbon fuels. CO interferes with the blood's ability to carry oxygen to the body's tissues and results in numerous [adverse health effects](#). Over 80 percent of the CO emitted in urban areas is contributed by motor vehicles. CO is a [criteria air pollutant](#).

**Carbon sequestration:** The process through which agricultural and forestry practices [remove carbon dioxide \(CO<sub>2</sub>\) from the atmosphere](#). The term “**carbon sinks**” is also used to describe agricultural and forestry lands that absorb CO<sub>2</sub>, the most important global warming gas emitted by human activities.

**Certificates of Participation (COP):** Certificates of Participation (COP), the most commonly used form of lease purchase financing, create a tax-exempt lease to finance capital improvement projects or to purchase essential equipment. A COP is a lease purchase agreement that is divided and sold to multiple investors in fractions, similar to stocks, usually in \$5,000 denominations. Most COPs receive investment ratings from a rating agency and each certificate represents a proportional interest in the payments that will be made by the [county government](#). Although rarely done, some counties have their COPs insured rather than receive a rating from an investment agency. (Source: NACO at <http://www.naco.org/>)

**Channelization:** (1) The straightening and/or deepening of a watercourse for purposes of storm-runoff control or ease of navigation. Channelization often includes lining of stream banks with a retaining material such as concrete. (2) At the intersection of roadways, the directional separation of traffic lanes through the use of curbs or raised islands that limit the paths that vehicles may take through the intersection.

**Clean Air Act:** Requires EPA to set **National Ambient Air Quality Standards** for six common air pollutants, known as “**criteria pollutants**,” that are found all over the United States: particle pollution (particulate matter), ground-level ozone, carbon monoxide, sulfur oxides, nitrogen oxides, and lead. EPA regulates them by developing human health-based and/or environmentally based criteria (science-based guidelines) for setting permissible levels.

**Clustered Development:** Development in which a number of dwelling units are placed in closer proximity than usual, or are attached, with the purpose of retaining an open-space area.

**Community Choice Aggregation:** Assembly Bill 117 permits municipalities to aggregate and provide electricity to residents, businesses, and public facilities. Investor-owned utilities (IOUs) continue to own and operate the transmission and distribution system, and provide metering, billing, and other customer service functions.

**Community Service District (CSD):** A geographic subarea of a city or county used for the planning and delivery of parks, recreation, and other human services based on an assessment of the service needs of the population in that subarea. A CSD is a taxation district with independent administration.

**Conservation:** Planned management of a natural resource to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect.

**Consultation:** The meaningful and timely process of seeking, discussing, and considering carefully the views of others, in a manner that is cognizant of all parties' cultural values and, where feasible, seeking agreement. Consultation between government agencies and Native American tribes shall be conducted in a way that is mutually respectful of each party's sovereignty. Consultation shall also recognize the tribes' potential needs for confidentiality with respect to places that have traditional tribal cultural significance (California Government Code Section 65353.4).

**Cultural Landscape:** A significant, historical landscape meeting criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places pursuant to guidance provided by the National Park Service and the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

**Cultural Resources:** Cultural resources encompass archaeological, traditional, and built environment resources, including but not necessarily limited to buildings, structures, objects, districts, and sites. Cultural resources include sites of important events, traditional cultural places and sacred sites, and places associated with an important person (taken from the Caltrans Standard Environmental Reference, Environmental Handbook, Volume I, Chapter 28: Cultural Resources).

**Dedication:** The turning over by an owner or developer of private land for public use, and the acceptance of land for such use by the governmental agency having jurisdiction over the public function for which it will be used. Dedications for roads, parks, school sites, or other public uses often are made conditions for approval of a development by a city or county to develop.

**Desalination:** Refers to any of several processes that remove excess salt and other minerals from water often for conversion to fresh water suitable for human consumption or irrigation.

**Development (Coastal):** Pursuant to PRC 30106, "Development" means, on land, in or under water, the placement or erection of any solid material or structure; discharge or disposal of any dredged material or of any gaseous, liquid, solid, or thermal waste; grading, removing, dredging, mining, or extraction of any materials; change in the density or intensity of use of land, including, but not limited to, subdivision pursuant to the Subdivision Map Act (commencing with Section 66410 of the Government Code), and any other division of land, including lot splits, except where the land division is brought about in connection with the purchase of such land by a public agency for public recreational use; change in the intensity of use of water, or of access thereto; construction, reconstruction, demolition, or alteration of the size of any structure, including any facility of any private, public, or municipal utility; and the removal or harvesting of major vegetation other than for agricultural purposes, kelp harvesting, and timber operations which are in accordance with a timber harvesting plan submitted pursuant to the provisions of the Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973 (commencing with Section 4511). As used in this

section, "structure" includes, but is not limited to, any building, road, pipe, flume, conduit, siphon, aqueduct, telephone line, and electrical power transmission and distribution line.

**Development (Inland):** For purposes of implementing this Conservation and Open Space Element, development is any activity or alteration of the landscape, its terrain contour or vegetation including the erection or alteration of buildings or structures. Development does not include crop production or grazing. New development is any construction, or alteration of an existing structure or land use, or establishment of a land use after the effective date of Title 22.

**Discretionary:** Requires the exercise of judgment and the resolution of factual issues to determine if the application and requested entitlement conform with the provisions of Title 22. Generally, a discretionary permit consists of any entitlement that requires a decision to approve, approve subject to conditions or disapprove, based on the judgment of the Planning Commission after a hearing. (See "Ministerial Permit").

**Distributed Energy Resources (DER):** Small, modular, energy generation and storage technologies that provide electric capacity or energy located where it's needed. DER's typically produce less than 10 megawatts (MW) of power and include wind turbines, photovoltaics (PV), fuel cells, microturbines, reciprocating engines, combustion turbines, cogeneration, and energy storage systems. DER systems may be either connected to the local electric power grid or isolated from the grid in stand-alone applications.

**Easement:** A legal right to use or control the property of another for a designated purpose, which appears of record in favor of the owner of the easement.

**Easement, Conservation:** A tool for acquiring open space with less than full-fee purchase, whereby a public agency buys only certain specific rights from the land owner. These may be positive rights (providing the public with the opportunity to hunt, fish, hike, or ride over the land) or they may be restrictive rights (limiting the uses to which the land owner may devote the land in the future.

**Ecosystem:** A dynamic and interrelating complex of plant and animal communities and their associated environment. Examples are grasslands, forests and sand dunes.

**Ecosystem approach:** A philosophy of resource management that focuses on protecting or restoring the function, structure, and species composition of an ecosystem, recognizing that all components are interrelated.

**Ecotones:** Transitional zones between two adjacent communities, containing species characteristic of both as well as other species occurring only within the zone.

**Emission Standard:** The maximum amount of pollutant legally permitted to be discharged from a single source, either mobile or stationary.

**Rare, Threatened or Endangered Species:** Those plants and animal species identified as candidate, rare, threatened or endangered based upon. State regulations (California Administrative Code, Title 14, Sections 670.2 or 670.5), Federal regulations (Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Sections 17.11 or 17.12), or where an unlisted species has been shown to meet the criteria for a rare or endangered species.

**Energy Conservation:** Means reducing energy waste, such as turning lights, heating, and motors off when not needed.

**Energy Efficiency:** Doing the same or more work with less energy, such as replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs or buying an Energy Star appliance to use less energy for the same or greater output.

**Energy facilities:** Include but are not limited to the following renewable energy projects: solar power generating facilities, waste-burning biomass facilities, wind energy development, and hydroelectric facilities.

**Environment:** In CEQA, “the physical conditions which exist within the area which will be affected by a proposed project, including land, air, water, mineral, flora, fauna, noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance.”

**Environmental Impact Report (EIR):** A report required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) which assesses all the environmental characteristics of an area and determines what effects or impacts will result if the area is altered or disturbed by a proposed action or project. See **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**.

**Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP):** [California law](#) requires State government to practice Environmentally Preferable Purchasing, which is the procurement of goods and services that have a reduced impact on human health and the environment as compared to other goods and services serving the same purpose.

**Erosion:** The wearing away of the land surface by running water, wind, ice or other geological agents, including such processes as gravitational creep. [Added 1999, Ord. 2863]

**Exotic species:** Any species or other variable biological material that enters an ecosystem beyond its historic range, including such organisms transferred from one country to another. Also known as nonindigenous or nonnative (State of California 2008a).

**Farmland of Statewide Importance:** This is land, in addition to prime and unique farmlands, that is of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oil seed crops. Criteria for defining and delineating this land are to be determined by the appropriate State agency or agencies. Generally, additional [farmlands of statewide importance](#) include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some may produce as high a yield as prime farmlands if conditions are favorable. In some States, additional farmlands of statewide importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by State law.

**Feasible:** Capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable time taking into account economic, environmental, social, and technological factors.

**Flood, 100-Year:** See “Base Flood”.

**Floodplain:** The relatively level land area on either side of the banks of a stream regularly subject to flooding. That part of the floodplain subject to a one percent chance of flooding in any given year is designated as an “area of special flood hazard” by the Federal Insurance Administration.

**Floodway:** The channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved to discharge the 100-year flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than one foot.

**Fossil fuel facilities:** Include, but are not limited to oil and gas wells, separators, and refineries.

**Climate Change (also referred to as 'global climate change'):** The term 'climate change' is sometimes used to refer to all forms of climatic inconsistency, but because the Earth's climate is never static, the term is more properly used to imply a significant change from one climatic condition to another. In some cases, climate change' has been used synonymously with the term, 'global warming'; scientists however, tend to use the term in the wider sense to also include natural changes in climate. See also Enhanced Greenhouse Effect.

**Graywater:** See “Recycled Water”.

**Green Building:** Sustainable or "green" building is a holistic approach to design, construction, and demolition that minimizes the building's impact on the environment, the occupants, and the community.

**Greenhouse gas or “greenhouse gases” (GHG):** Gases which cause heat to be trapped in the atmosphere, warming the earth. Greenhouse gases are necessary to keep the earth warm, but increasing concentrations of these gases are implicated in global climate change. Greenhouse gases include all of the following gases: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide,



hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride. The majority of greenhouse gases come from natural sources, although human activity is also a major contributor.

**Greenhouse Gas Inventory:** A greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory provides estimates of the amount of GHGs emitted to and removed from the atmosphere by human activities. A city or county that conducts an inventory looks at both community emission sources as well as emissions from government operations. A base year is chosen and used to gather all data from that year. Inventories include data collection from such things as vehicle miles traveled (VMTs), energy usage from electricity and gas, and waste. Inventories include estimates for carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), sulfur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), and perfluorocarbons (PFCs), which are referred to as the “six Kyoto gases”.

**Groundwater:** Subsurface water in a zone of saturation.

**Groundwater Overdraft:** Develops when long-term groundwater extraction exceeds aquifer recharge, producing declining trends in aquifer storage. Overdraft is usually evident by, declines in surface-water levels and stream flow, reduction or elimination of vegetation, land subsidence, and seawater intrusion.

**Groundwater Recharge:** Any of the approved methods that are designed to detain or slow surface water runoff so that percolation is enhanced.

**Habitat:** The physical location or type of environment in which an organism or biological population lives or occurs.

**Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP):** A plan that outlines ways of maintaining, enhancing, and protecting a given habitat type needed to protect species; usually includes measures to minimize impacts, and may include provisions for permanently protecting land, restoring habitat, and relocating plants or animals to another area.

**Hazardous Material:** Any substance that, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment. The term includes, but is not limited to, hazardous substances and hazardous wastes.

**Highly Productive Rangeland Soils:** Rangeland soils vary widely in production capability, and within any individual operation the majority of forage production is from the most productive soils. This include soils meeting all of the following criteria:

- 1) Produces forage that is equivalent to 60% or more of the maximum normal year forage production for that soil survey area;



- 2) Majority of the forage produced is herbaceous;
- 3) Slope is less than 30% (except soil types Coastal 133 and 168 and Carizzo 130, each 15-50% slope).

Rangeland soils are identified in USDA NRCS soil surveys, of which there are three primary survey areas in San Luis Obispo County; Highly Productive Rangeland Soils were not identified for the San Luis Obispo County portion of the Northern Santa Barbara soil survey area.

**Historic Preservation:** The preservation of historically significant structures and neighborhoods in order to facilitate restoration and rehabilitation of the building(s) to a former condition.

**Integrated Regional Water Management Plan:** A Strategic Plan for Sustainable Water Resources to Meet Human and Environmental Needs in San Luis Obispo County

**Integrity:** In the context of historical structures, this generally refers to how closely a building, place, or property matches its original condition. As defined by the [National Park Service](#), “integrity” is measured for seven aspects or qualities: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

**Invasive species:** Species that establish and reproduce rapidly outside of their native range and may threaten the diversity or abundance of native species through competition for resources, predation, parasitism, hybridization with native populations, introduction of pathogens, or physical or chemical alteration of the invaded habitat (State of California 2008a).

**Island effect:** The isolation of one habitat fragment from other areas of habitat. Habitat fragmentation is often caused by land conversion.

**Issues:** Important unsettled community matters or problems that are identified in a community’s general plan and dealt with by the plan’s objectives, policies, plan proposals, and implementation programs.

**Landmark:** (1) A building, site, object, structure, or significant tree having historical, architectural, social, or cultural significance and marked for preservation by the local, state, or federal government. (2) A visually prominent or outstanding structure or natural feature that functions as a point of orientation or identification.

**LEED:** Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a standard established by the U.S. Green Building Council.

**Level of Service (LOS) Standard:** A standard used by government agencies to measure the quality or effectiveness of a municipal service such as police, fire, or library, or the performance of a facility, such as a street or highway.

**Life Cycle Costing (LCC):** The process of evaluating the total overall costs and benefits of buildings or equipment over time, including initial costs of design and construction; operating costs; long-term costs of maintenance, repair and replacement; and other environmental or social costs over its full life, rather than simply based on purchase cost alone.

**Local Coastal Program (LCP):** The LCP consists of (a) the Local Coastal Plan, (b) the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance, and (c) other implementing actions for the coastal zone of the county which meets the requirements of the California Coastal Act of 1976 as certified by the California Coastal Commission.

**Low Impact Development (LID):** An innovative stormwater management approach with a basic principle to design the built environment to remain a functioning part of an ecosystem rather than exist apart from it. LID's goal is to mimic a site's predevelopment hydrology by using design techniques that infiltrate, filter, store, evaporate, and detain runoff close to its source.

**Mineral Resource:** Land on which known deposits of commercially viable mineral or aggregate deposits exist. This designation is applied to sites determined by the California Geological Survey as being a resource of regional significance and is intended to help maintain the quarrying operations and protect them from encroachment of incompatible land uses.

**Mixed Use:** Properties on which various uses such as office, commercial, institutional, and residential

are combined in a single building or on a single site in an integrated development project with significant functional interrelationships and a coherent physical design. A "single site" may include contiguous properties.

**National Ambient Air Quality Standards:** The pre-scribed level of pollutants in the outside air that cannot be exceeded legally during a specified time in a specified geographical area.

**National Register of Historic Places:** The official list, established by the National Historic Preservation Act, of sites, districts, buildings, structures, and objects significant in the nation's history or whose artistic or architectural value is unique. used in reference to air quality. (See "Attainment.").

**Native Species:** A species within its natural range or natural zone of dispersal, i.e., within the range it would or could occupy without direct or indirect introduction and/or care by humans.

**Natural Area Preserve:** An area of land or water managed by County Parks, a similar public agency, or a private non-profit which remains in a predominantly natural or undeveloped state to provide resource protection and passive recreation for present and future generations. (Parks and Rec. Element)

**Non-Attainment:** The condition of not achieving a desired or required level of performance. Frequently used in reference to air quality.

**Oak:** Any species in the genus *Quercus*.

**Oak woodlands:** An oak stand with a greater than 10 percent canopy cover or that may have historically supported greater than 10 percent canopy cover. - *California Oak Woodlands Conservation Act*.

**Open Space:** Is "...any parcel or area of land or water which is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use...as designated on a local ...open space plan as any of the following:...open space for the preservation of natural resources...the managed production of resource....for outdoor recreation...for public health and safety..." (Government code 65560(B))

**Ordinance:** A law or regulation set forth and adopted by a governmental authority, usually a city or county.

**Other Productive Soils:** Soils meeting the definitions of Unique Farmland, having a soil slope of 30% or less (except Paso Soil 198, 15- 50% slope), and meeting at least two of the following three criteria:

- 1) California Revised Storie Index is fair, good or excellent;
- 2) Irrigated Capacity Class is one through six;
- 3) More than 3% of the soil type is in irrigated/permanent crop use as of 2008.

Criteria 1 and 2 are based upon information from the Web Soil Survey. Criterion 3 is based upon GIS cropland mapping by the San Luis Obispo County Agriculture Department.

**Ozone:** Produced when gases or vapors created by cars, solvents, factories, and pesticides mix and react in the presence of sunlight. This results in certain health effects such as breathing difficulties, lung damage, coughing, and chest pains.

**Paleontology:** The science of the forms of life existing in former geologic periods, as represented by their fossils.

**Particulate Matter (PM10) and Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5):** Fine mineral, metal, smoke, soot, and dust particles suspended in the air. While particulate matter also has many natural sources, human derived sources such as vehicle exhaust, road dust, mineral quarries, grading, demolition, agricultural tilling, and burning are major contributors to exceedances in our county. In addition to reducing visibility, particulate matter can lodge in the lungs and cause serious,

long-term respiratory illness and other health problems. The smaller the size of the particle, the deeper it can penetrate into the lungs, and the more difficult it is to expel.)

**Preservation:** To keep safe from injury, harm, or destruction.

**Prime Farmland:** Land which has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of crops. The land could be cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forest land, or other land, but not urban built-up land or water. “It has the combination of soil properties, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops in an economic manner if it is treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. In general, prime farmland has an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, an acceptable level of acidity or alkalinity, an acceptable content of salt or sodium, and few or no rocks. Its soils are permeable to water and air. Prime farmland is not excessively eroded or saturated with water for long periods of time, and it either does not flood frequently during the growing season or is protected from flooding. Users of the lists of prime farmland map units should recognize that soil properties are only one of several criteria that are necessary.” Soil map units mapped as Prime Farmland are as depicted on the [Soil Survey map](#).

**Production Agriculture:** Refer to the Agriculture Element of the County General Plan, Appendix F, Production Agriculture Determination.

**Reclamation:** The process of land treatment that minimizes and mitigates otherwise unavoidable or existing water degradation, air pollution, damage to aquatic or wildlife habitat, flooding, erosion, and other adverse effects from surface or underground mining operations, including adverse surface effects incidental to underground mines, so that mined lands are reclaimed and restored to a usable condition readily adaptable for alternate land uses and that will constitute no danger to public health or safety. The process may extend to affected lands surrounding mined lands, and may require backfilling, grading, resoiling, revegetation, soil compaction, stabilization, or other measures.

**Recycled Water, Reclaimed Water, Treated Sewage Effluent Water, or Greywater:** Treated or recycled waste water of a quality suitable for non-potable uses such as landscape irrigation; not intended for human consumption.

**Recovery Plan:** Serves as a guide for activities to be undertaken by Federal, State, or private entities in helping to recover and conserve endangered or threatened species.

**Renewable energy:** Energy from sources that regenerate and are less damaging to the environment, such as solar, wind, biomass, and small-scale hydroelectric power.

**Riparian habitat:** Characterized by vegetated areas along bodies of freshwater including streams, lakes and rivers. It has been identified as the most important habitat to land birds in California. Over 135 bird species depend on riparian habitat not only for nesting, but also stop-over sites during migration and places to live during the winter. Riparian habitat that supports healthy bird populations will also support other wildlife, including fish. Riparian habitat also provides riverbank protection, erosion control and improved water quality, as well as numerous recreational and aesthetic values. **Riparian corridors** are highly favorable for wildlife. They are the areas with the most water and the densest plant cover, providing predator protection, shade, breeding and nesting areas, and food sources. (For more information see the [Riparian Habitat Joint Venture](#)).

**Scenic Corridors:** Scenic corridors are view areas, or “viewsheds” from public roads and highways that have unique or outstanding scenic qualities. Inappropriate development can intrude upon these viewsheds. Some examples are highly visible graded roads and pads, buildings that are too close to a highway, and building designs that highlight structures and dominate rather than blend with a natural landscape. Scenic highways and roads are scenic corridors that are designated to conserve and enhance their scenic beauty.

**Sensitive Biological Resources:** Includes those species listed by the federal or state government as endangered or threatened as well non listed species of concern. Sensitive biological resources also include habitats of limited occurrence or distribution such as riparian and riverine areas subject to Army Corps of Engineers or California Department of Fish and Game jurisdiction.

**[Soils of Statewide Importance:](#)** Soil of Statewide Importance designation is based on soil physical and chemical criteria, whether or not land is actually irrigated (provided that irrigation is feasible). This is land, in addition to prime and unique farmlands, that is of statewide importance for the production of crops. Generally, farmlands of statewide importance include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some may produce as high a yield as prime farmlands if conditions are favorable. Soil of Statewide Importance is identified and mapped as per the [Web Soil Survey](#).

**Special Plants:** A broad term used to refer to all the plant taxa inventoried by the Department of Fish and Game’s California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), regardless of their legal or protection status (State of California 2008c).

**Special-Status Species, Listed Species, or Sensitive Species:** Are threatened, endangered, fully protected, and species of special concern.

**Special Animals:** A general term that refers to all of the taxa the CNDDDB is interested in tracking, regardless of their legal or protection status. This list is also referred to as the list of “species at risk” or “special status species” (State of California 2008b).

**Sustainability:** Community use of natural resources in a way that does not jeopardize the ability of future generations to live and prosper.

**Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL):** A measure of the amount of contaminants in water. TMDL is used to measure and set targets for water quality.

**Trustee Agency:** A state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project which are held in trust for the people of the State of California. There are 4 trustee agencies – the Department of Fish and Game, State Lands Commission, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the University of California.

**Unique farmland:** In general, [unique farmland](#) is land other than prime farmland that is used for the production of specific high value food and fiber crops. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high quality and/or high yields of a specific crop when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Examples of such crops are citrus, tree nuts, olives, cranberries, fruit, and vegetables.

**Urban Heat Island:** The term "heat island" describes built up areas that are hotter than nearby rural areas. On a hot, sunny summer day, roof and pavement surface temperatures can be 50–90°F (27–50°C) hotter than the air, while shaded or moist surfaces remain close to air temperatures. These surface urban heat islands, particularly during the summer, have multiple impacts and contribute to atmospheric urban heat islands. Heat islands can affect communities by increasing summertime peak energy demand, air conditioning costs, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, heat-related illness and mortality, and water quality. (USEPA 2008) <http://www.epa.gov/heatislands/index.htm>

**Urban Reserve:** An area outside of an urban service area but within an urban growth boundary, in which future development and extension of municipal services are contemplated but not imminent.

**Urban Reserve Line:** As defined in Framework for Planning, Part I of the Land Use Element. [Amended 1995, Ord. 2741]

**Vehicle-Miles Traveled (VMT):** A key measure of overall street and highway use. Reducing VMT is often a major objective in efforts to reduce vehicular congestion and achieve regional air quality goals.

**View Corridor:** The line of sight - identified as to height, width, and distance - of an observer looking toward an object of significance to the community (e.g., ridgeline, river, historic building, etc.); the route that directs the viewer's attention.

**Viewshed:** see "Scenic Corridors".

**Watershed:** The total area above a given point on a watercourse that contributes water to its flow; the entire region drained by a waterway or watercourse that drains into a lake, or reservoir.

**Water Wheeling:** Occurs when one agency conveys water through another agency's facility. California Water Code requires that wheeling must not harm any other legal user of water.

**Wetlands:** "Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.

**Wetlands, Jurisdictional:** Wetlands under the protection of the [United States Army Corps of Engineers](#) (USACE) as designated in the Rivers and Harbors Act Section 10 and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

**Wildlife Movement Corridors:** Linear features whose primary wildlife function is to connect at least 2 significant habitat areas.

**Williamson Act:** Known formally as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, it was designed as an incentive to retain prime agricultural land and open-space in agricultural use, thereby slowing its conversion to urban and suburban development. The program entails a ten-year contract between the City or County and an owner of land whereby the land is taxed on the basis of its agricultural use rather than its market value. The land becomes subject to certain enforceable restrictions, and certain conditions need to be met prior to approval of an agreement.

**Woodlands:** Lands covered with woods or trees.